HOSEA 2

PARAGRAPH DIVISIONS OF MODERN TRANSLATIONS

NASB	NKJV	NRSV	TEV	NJB (MT VERSING)
Israel's Unfaithfulness Condemned 2:1-7	God's Unfaithful People	Israel Will Suffer Public Shame and Personal Privation Like a Harlot	Unfaithful Gomer – Unfaithful Israel	Hope for the Future 2:1-3
				Yahweh and His Unfaithful Wife
(1-7)				(1c-3)
	2:2-5 (2-3)	2:2-5 (2-3)	2:2-13 (2-13)	2:2-5
	(4-5)			2:4-7 (4-7)
	2:6-8 (6-8)		2:6-7	
2:8-13 (8-13)			2:8-13	2:8-15 (8-15)
	2:9-13 (9-11)			
	(12-13)			
Restoration of Israel	God's Mercy on His People	The Lord Will Allure Israel Back	The Lord's Love for His People	
2:14-20 (14-20)	2:14-20 (14-15)	2:14-23 (14-15)	2:14-17	Reconciliation
	(16-18)			2:16-17 (16-17)
			2:18-23	2:18-19 (18-19)

	(19-20)		(19-20)	
				2:20-25 (20-25)
2:21-23 (23)	2:21-23 (21-23)	(21-23)	(21-23)	

READING CYCLE THREE (see "Bible Interpretation Seminar")
FOLLOWING THE ORIGINAL AUTHOR'S INTENT AT PARAGRAPH LEVEL

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

Read the chapter in one sitting. Identify the subjects (reading cycle #3). Compare your subject divisions with the five translations above. Paragraphing is not inspired, but it is the key to following the original author's intent, which is the heart of interpretation. Every paragraph has one and only one subject.

CONTEXTUAL INSIGHTS

A. Hosea 2:1-15 describes God's divorce case against Israel because of her continuing idolatry.

B. The rest of the chapter lays out God's immediate plans and future plans (by the recurring use of "therefore").
   1. Immediate plans
      a. Hos. 2:6-8, God will stop Israel from pursuing idolatry ("hedge up her way")
      b. Hos. 2:9-13, God will stop Israel's amalgamated worship (exiles)
   2. Future plans
      a. Hos. 2:14-20, God will woo and marry Israel again
      b. Hos. 2:21-23, God's covenant blessing will be poured out on Israel in the Promised Land

WORD AND PHRASE STUDY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 2:1-7

[1]Say to your brothers, "Ammi," and to your sisters, "Ruhamah."
[2]"Contend with your mother, contend,
For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband;
And let her put away her harlotry from her face
And her adultery from between her breasts,
[3]Or I will strip her naked
And expose her as on the day when she was born.
I will also make her like a wilderness,
Make her like desert land
And slay her with thirst.
[4]Also, I will have no compassion on her children,

Because they are children of harlotry.
5For their mother has played the harlot;
She who conceived them has acted shamefully.
For she said, 'I will go after my lovers,
Who give *me* my bread and my water,
My wool and my flax, my oil and my drink.'
6Therefore, behold, I will hedge up her way with thorns,
And I will build a wall against her so that she cannot find her paths.
7She will pursue her lovers, but she will not overtake them;
And she will seek them, but will not find *them*.
Then she will say, 'I will go back to my first husband,
For it was better for me then than now!'

2:1 "Say" This word (BDB 55, KB 65) is a *Qal* IMPERATIVE, which figuratively denotes a certain future action of restoration and unification. This verse should go with the preceding salvation oracle (Hos. 1:10-2:1).

▣ **"Ammi"** This means "My people" (BDB 766). It is a covenant designation for the people of God (e.g., Exod. 6:6-7; 19:5-6). This is the reversal of Hos. 1:9 (cf. Hos. 2:23).

▣ **"Ruhamah"** This word means "pitied," "tender mercy," or "compassion" (BDB 933). This is an expression of the great love, compassion, and mercy of God. This is the reversal of Hos. 1:6 (cf. Hos. 2:23).

2:2

NASB, LXX	**"Contend. . .contend"**
NKJV	**"bring charges. . .bring charges"**
NRSV, TEV, Peshitta	**"plead. . .plead"**
NJB	**"to court. . .to court"**
JPSOA	**"rebuke. . .rebuke"**

This is a legal term (BDB 936, KB 1224, *Qal* IMPERATIVE, used twice in this verse) for a lawsuit (cf. Hos. 4:1-3; 12:2; Jer. 2:5-9; Micah 6:1-8). This verse is an analogy of Hosea's divorce (cf. Deut. 24:1-4) from Gomer. There are similar divorce formulas in Akkadian literature. The significance of Hosea's use of the marriage contract as an analogy of the covenant between God and Israel is seen also in Isa. 50:1; 54:4-8; Jer. 3:1-20; Ezek. 16 and 23; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:9; 22:17.

Hosea calls on the children to plead with their mother (national Israel) to stop (lit. "put away," BDB 693, KB 747, *Hiphil* JUSSIVE) the activity (i.e., idolatry) that has led to the divorce case.

One wonders if this metaphor of parent and children is related to the multigenerational comment of Exod. 20:5; Deut. 5:9-10. Evil and rebellion move through families (third and fourth generations), but the good news is that forgiveness is possible and that it also moves through generations (to a hundred generations, cf. Deut. 7:9)!

▣ **"with your mother"** This verse relates to the formal divorce charges against Israel. Usually national unfaithfulness is attributed to the father's sins, but here and in Isa. 50:1; Ezekiel 16 it is attributed to a wife's unfaithfulness! The covenant is broken because of their repeated unfaithfulness!

▣ **"she is not my wife, and I am not her husband"** This simple declarative statement, said publically, may have been the official announcement of a divorce in the ancient Near East. However, here the context demands that divorce is only a threat because the husband (YHWH) calls on his wife (Israel) to return lest he is forced to act (cf. Hos. 2:3).

▣ **"let her put away"** This VERB (BDB 693, KB 747, *Hiphil* JUSSIVE) can mean "turn away from," as in Deut. 7:4. It is used in Amos for God rejecting Israel's worship (cf. Amos 5:23). Hosea uses this VERB often (cf. Hos. 2:2,17; 4:18; 7:14; 9:12). Context is everything!

▣ **"her adultery from between her breasts"** This may refer to

1. identifying jewelry (cf. Jer. 4:30)
2. marks that cultic prostitutes wore (cf. Hos. 2:13; lit. "holy thing")
3. literally to a male lover positioned over a prostitute (i.e., "from her face"; "between her breasts")

2:3 "Or I will strip her naked" Nakedness is one of the consequences of covenant disobedience in Deut. 28:48 (cf. Jer. 16:39; 23:29). This custom of dismissing a divorced woman publicly and stripping her naked (cf. Ezek. 16:35-42) is found in the cuneiform tablets, both from Hana and Nuzi, dating from around 1500 B.C. It is a symbol of her

1. divorced and going into slavery
2. the fruitlessness of the land (the curses of Deuteronomy 27-29) because of her repeated idolatry.

▣ **"I will also make her like a wilderness"** The rest of Hos. 2:3 describes one of the covenant curses (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) which will fall upon Israel. YHWH, not Ba'al, is the source of fertility! One of God's ways to attract the nations to know Him was the promise of abundance. Abraham's descendants' lack of covenant obedience thwarted this from occurring. Therefore, this promised abundance is negated temporally, but reaffirmed eschatalogically (cf. Amos 9:13-15; Joel 3:18).

2:4 "I will have no compassion" This is the same word (BDB 933) in a verbal form (KB 1216, *Piel* IMPERFECT) found in Hos. 1:6, which is the name of Gomer's second child. It is used without the negative, in a positive sense in Hos. 2:19,23.

The seeming vacillation between judgment and blessing illustrates the mood swings (anthropomorphic) of God's heart. He wants to bless, but blessing involves a personal trust and willingness to live out His character!

▣ **"Because they are children of harlotry"** The idolatry of the mother (cf. Hos. 2:5) also characterizes the children. The wife symbolizes unfaithful national Israel, while the children symbolize individual Israelites (cf. The Jewish Study Bible, p. 1146).

2:5 Here is an example of Israel assuming that Ba'al and Asherah provided her food, clothing, and luxuries, while all the time it was the covenant God of Sinai, YHWH (cf. Hos. 2:8; the curses of Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28; Jer. 14:22). YHWH is a jealous (love word) God (e.g., Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 6:24; 5:9; 6:15). The descendants of Abraham made YHWH jealous by going after other Gods (e.g., Deut. 32:16,21; Ps. 78:58). Later the Northern Ten Tribes (Israel) made Him jealous (e.g., Hosea 2:8) and also Judah (cf. 1 Kgs. 14:22; Zech. 1:14; 8:2).

There is debate among OT scholars about the sexual aspects of Canaanite worship. There is little textual or pictorial evidence for a sexually oriented fertility cult in Canaan. Much of the language in Hosea and Jeremiah is metaphorical, not literal. If this is correct then Israel and later Judah corrupted even Canaanite religion!

▣ **"For she said"** There is a repetition in this quote that might reflect a liturgy for Ba'al worship.

2:6 "I will hedge up her way with thorns" Hedges (BDB 962) were used (1) to keep animals or humans out of the fields or (2) for an enclosure to keep animals contained. Number 2 fits this context best.

There is a threefold repetition of metaphors in this verse.

1. hedge up (BDB 962, KB 1312,*Qal* ACTIVE PARTICIPLE) your way with thorns
2. wall up (BDB 154, KB 180, *Qal* PERFECT) her wall (COGNATE ACCUSATIVE)
3. her faith she will not find (BDB 592, KB 619, *Qal* IMPERFECT)

Israel's true husband (YHWH) does not immediately put her away as unfaithful, but tries to lead her to repentance by blocking her access to Ba'al worship (assuming "her lovers" are fertility gods of Canaan).

If, on the other hand, "her lovers" are foreign powers (and by implication of treaty rituals their gods) then this verse is parallel to 5:13. Notice YHWH still desires repentance and restoration (cf. Hos. 5:15)! The purpose of YHWH's judgments is always redemptive (cf. Hos. 3:5; 6:1; 14:1).

2:7 "pursue. . .eagerly chase after" These are both *Piel* PERFECTS with *waw*. In Hosea "the lovers" (cf. Hos. 2:5) refers to Ba'al worship. However, they could also refer to political alliances (cf. Hos. 5:13, see NIDOTTE, vol. 4, pp. 422-426).

▣ **"Then she will say, 'I will go back to my first husband,**

For it was better for me then than now'" God's purpose in temporal judgments (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28) was to cause Israel to return to Him. Their prosperity (cf. Hos. 2:21-23) was meant to be a way to attract the attention of the world.

SPECIAL TOPIC: YHWH'S ETERNAL REDEMPTIVE PLAN

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 2:8-13

8"For she does not know that it was I who gave her the grain, the new wine and the oil,
And lavished on her silver and gold,
***Which* they used for Baal.**
9Therefore, I will take back My grain at harvest time
And My new wine in its season.
I will also take away My wool and My flax
***Given* to cover her nakedness.**
10And then I will uncover her lewdness
In the sight of her lovers,
And no one will rescue her out of My hand.
11I will also put an end to all her gaiety,
Her feasts, her new moons, her sabbaths
And all her festal assemblies.
12I will destroy her vines and fig trees,
Of which she said, 'These are my wages
Which my lovers have given me.'
And I will make them a forest,
And the beasts of the field will devour them.
13I will punish her for the days of the Baals
When she used to offer sacrifices to them

And adorn herself with her earrings and jewelry,
And follow her lovers, so that she forgot Me," declares the LORD.

2:8 "For she does not know it was I who gave her" God's heart (emphatic "I") breaks as His bride (a segment of His covenant people) does not recognize His love and provision (cf. Jer. 14:22). Therefore, in Hos. 2:9, YHWH withholds His blessing on crops and herds (cf. Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28).

▣ **"the grain, the new wine and the oil"** These three items represented the basic needs of life (cf. Deut. 7:13; 11:14; Joel 2:19).

▣ **"silver and gold"** God's blessings of valuable metals (either in the Exodus or through agricultural prosperity) were used to make idols (e.g., Deut. 29:17; Isa. 40:19; 46:5-7; Jer. 10:3-10) and jewelry (cf. Hos. 2:13) in Ba'al's honor!

▣ **"used for Baal"** "Ba'al" is the main god of Tyrian fertility worship which was introduced into Israel through Jezebel. Ba'al means "master," "husband," "lord" and is the name for the Canaanite storm god (sometimes war god). In the OT his consort is Asherah or Astarte (in Ugaritic myth it is Anat).

2:9-13 This seems to refer to exile (cf. Ezek. 16:35-43).

▣

NASB, NRSV, TEV, NJB	**"I will take back"**
NKJV, Peshitta	**"I will return and take away"**
LXX	**"I will return and carry off"**

The NKJV is the more literal here. There are two VERBS, "return" (BDB 996, KB 1427, *Qal* IMPERFECT) and "take back" (BDB 542, KB 534, *Qal* PERFECT with *waw*). The first VERB is one of the major Hebrew terms used of "repentance." They would not return to YHWH so He returned to them and confiscated His gifts (grain, wine, oil, precious metals), which He had freely and lovingly given to His wife. He took back His gifts because she had mistakenly attributed their presence to Ba'al (cf. Hos. 2:8).

SPECIAL TOPIC: REPENTANCE (OT)

▣ **"I will also take away"** This term (BDB 664, KB 717, *Hiphil* PERFECT) is used of snatching away a prey from a predator (e.g., 1 Sam. 17:35; Ps. 50:22; Hos. 2:9; 5:14; Amos 3:12; Micah 5:8; Ezek. 34:10). This same violent term is used again in Hos. 2:10, where it is translated "rescue" (NASB, NRSV). The non-existent gods of Canaan nor Israel's political allies can rescue Israel from YHWH's judgment (cf. Hos. 2:10; 5:14)!

2:10 Israel's "lovers," neither (1) lifeless idols nor (2) foreign alliances, would be able to help her.

▣

NASB, NKJV	**"lewdness"**
NRSV, REB, JPSOA	**"shame"**
TEV	**-----**
NJB	**"infamy"**
LXX	**"impurity"**
Peshitta	**"nakedness"**

The meaning of the term (BDB 615, KB 664) is uncertain because the root is uncertain because this form occurs only here in the OT. Scholars have speculated (KB 664)

1. repulsiveness
2. shamefulness
3. foolishness

The Rotherham Emphasized Bible footnote suggests "vagina."

2:11 Israel's cultic life will cease! Regular, joyful worship occasions, given by God to acknowledge Him, have been so corrupted that He will cause them to cease.

2:12 "I will destroy her vines and her figs" The prophets are very conscious of the Deuteronomic covenant and many of their prophecies deal with the cursing and blessing sections of Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28.

▣ **"Of which she said, 'These are my wages Which my lovers have given me'"** This is metaphorical language related to Israel's worship of the fertility gods of Canaan. Israel attributed the fertility of her land to the worship of these gods (cf. Hos. 2:13, Ba'al – male; Asherah, Astarte – female). Since YHWH was Israel's true husband, her association with other gods was labeled as "spiritual" (and in relation to fertility gods, actual) adultery or marital unfaithfulness.

David A. Hubbard, Hosea in the (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, p. 79) has speculated that there is a word play here between "fig tree" (BDB 1061, i.e., used in fertility worship) and "wages" (BDB 1071, cf. Hos. 9:1).

▣ **"and I will make them a forest and the beasts of the field will devour them"** Those who grow up in desert lands are very fearful of forests. This phrase means that Israel's cultivated lands will return to their natural state. In this environment the animals will increase and attack. This could refer to

1. attack the crops
2. attack people (cf. Hos. 13:7-8)

In context #1 fits best.

2:13 "the days of Baal" These are festivals of sexual orgies and imitation magic (cf. Hos. 4:13-14). The term "Ba'al" is PLURAL, possibly referring to the fact that Ba'al was worshiped at local shrines in every town and village. There is still a scholarly debate whether the sexual aspect of Ba'al worship was characteristic of Canaanite religion or added by Israel!

▣

NASB	**"offer sacrifices"**
NKJV, NRSV, TEV, NJB, Peshitta	**"burned incense"**
REB	**"burnt sacrifices"**
JPSOA	**"brought offerings"**

The VERB (BDB 882, KB 1094, *Hiphil* IMPERFECT) means "smoke" so it could refer to

1. incense (cf. Jer. 11:13)
2. a sacrifice (cf. Jer. 7:9)

The same ambiguity occurs in Hos. 11:2. In 1 Kgs. 11:8 this same term (*Hiphil* PERFECT) is used in conjunction with the VERB "to sacrifice" (BDB 256, KB 261), which seems to denote two separate acts: (1) incense and (2) sacrifice. If so, then this text should refer to incense.

▣ **"her earrings and jewelry"** Earrings were somehow connected to idolatry (cf. Gen. 35:4; Exod. 32:2). This was a common practice of dressing up for worship. Some assume that the Assyrian word for earrings (or nose ring) means the "holy thing" and that this refers to cultic prostitution. It is used in this sense in Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40-43.

This has nothing to do with wearing jewelry today!

▣ **"so that she forgot Me"** This phrase is emphasized! YHWH is depicted (anthropomorphically) as a spurned, jealous lover. Anthropomorphically God's feelings are affected by human choices and actions! The issue is personal relationship, here depicted as a marriage covenant. YHWH wants a fellowship with humans made in His image. This is the goal of creation.

SPECIAL TOPIC: ANTHROPOMORPHIC LANGUAGE USED TO DESCRIBE DEITY

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 2:14-20

14"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Bring her into the wilderness
And speak kindly to her.
15Then I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the valley of Achor as a door of hope.
And she will sing there as in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.
16It will come about in that day," declares the LORD,
"That you will call Me Ishi
And will no longer call Me Baali.
17For I will remove the names of the Baals from her mouth,
So that they will be mentioned by their names no more.
18In that day I will also make a covenant for them
With the beasts of the field,
The birds of the sky
And the creeping things of the ground.
And I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land,
And will make them lie down in safety.
19I will betroth you to Me forever;
Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice,
In lovingkindness and in compassion,
20And I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness.
Then you will know the LORD.

2:14-19 What a radical transition occurs at Hos. 2:14! The God of judgment again becomes the God of faithful love! God is depicted as a faithful husband and passionate lover. What a striking anthropomorphic metaphor for God.

God, the Holy One of Israel, the Eternal Creator reveals Himself to humanity in anthropomorphic analogies which focus on human family relationships. These familial relationships help fallen mankind to understand God and His desire to know us and fellowship with us!

2:14 "I will allure her" This VERB's (BDB 834, KB 984, *Piel* PARTICIPLE) meaning is uncertain, but the basic idea is "to persuade" or "entice" with the added connotation of

1. young lovers
2. patience (KB 985)

It is surely a love word!

Also note that the new covenant relationship is characterized by "I will" (cf. Hos. 2:14, 15, 17, 18, 19 [twice], 20, 21 [twice], 22 [thrice]).

▣ **"Bring her into the wilderness"** The wilderness could imply

1. a time of separation from Israel's idols (e.g., Hos. 3:3)
2. the wilderness wandering period of Israel (cf. Hos. 2:15), seen as an intimate encounter with YHWH. Later rabbis said it was Israel's honeymoon period with YHWH (e.g., 11:1-2; 13:4-5; Deut. 32:10-14; Jer. 2:2-3).

▣ **"And speak kindly to her"** This VERB (BDB 180, KB 210, *Piel* PERFECT with *waw*) means basically "to speak," but this term has a wide semantical field. In this context it implies "to speak intimately from one's heart to another's heart."

2:15 "the valley of Achor" "Achor" (BDB 747) means "troubling." This is the valley where Achan sinned and the Israeli army lost their first battle at Ai (cf. Joshua 7). However, it was the beginning of a time of entering the Promised Land (i.e., "as a door of hope") and God asserts that if they will return to Him, He will start all over again with them (a second exodus and honeymoon period, cf. Hos. 11:1-4; 13:4-5).

2:16 "It will come about in that day" This is an eschatological idiom (cf. Hos. 2:17,18,21) for an idealistic future time of YHWH's personal presence (i.e., Messiah and His children's covenant obedience.

▣ **"Ishi"** This means "husband" (BDB 35, e.g., Gen. 2:23; Jer. 31:32). God is often described in family terms (i.e., husband, father, Go'el). This is because He is a personal God and He wants to have an intimate relationship with His people. God as husband also explains the "jealousy" metaphor (cf. Exod. 20:5; 34:14; Deut. 4:24; 5:9; 6:15).

▣ **"Baali"** This means "my master," "my owner," "my lord," "my husband" (BDB 127, cf. Isa. 54:5). Apparently YHWHism became amalgamated with Ba'alism (Canaanite fertility cult):

1. notice the names of the children of Saul and Jonathan which include the term Ba'al (cf. 1 Chr. 9:40)
2. the Samaritan Ostraca written during the time of Jeroboam II has ten names which were formed from Ba'al and eleven names which were formed from YHWH (cf. Hos. 2:17).

YHWH's loving providence was attributed to Ba'al (cf. Hos. 2:8). This must stop (cf. Hos. 2:9-13)!

2:18 "In that day" God is promising a future restoration of Israel (cf. Hos. 2:18-23). See note at Hos. 2:16.

SPECIAL TOPIC: THAT DAY

▣ **"a covenant for them"** They already had a binding, eternal covenant (e.g., Gen. 15:18; 17:2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 21; Isa. 24:5; 55:3; 61:8). Why would they need a new one (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38)? Because YHWH was finally divorcing His faithless wife (i.e., first covenant broken), the exile was coming (removal from the Promised Land, like the Amorites, cf. Gen. 15:16).

This new covenant with the earth and the animals is also seen in Isa. 11:6-9 and Rom. 8:16-25. The Garden of Eden fellowship is restored (cf. Revelation 22). Hosea mentions the word "covenant" (BDB 136) more often than any other eighth- or seventh-century minor prophet (cf. Hos. 2:18; 6:7; 8:1).

SPECIAL TOPIC: COVENANT

▣ **"I will abolish the bow, the sword and war from the land"** Absence of war can only come from God. Fallen mankind has shown a propensity for conflict and aggression. Its absence will mark the day of the new covenant (e.g., Ps. 46:9; Isa. 2:4; Micah 4:3-4; Zech. 9:10).

▣ **"And will make them lie down in safety"** The "them" is ambiguous. It could refer to

1. Israel (cf. Hos. 2:18a)
2. the animals (Hos. 2:18b-d)
3. the relationship between humans and animals as in Eden (cf. Gen. 2)

2:19-20 There are seven characteristics of God's new covenant.

1. it is permanent
2. it is righteous
3. it is just
4. it is loyal and true (i.e., *hesed*, cf. Hos. 4:1)
5. it is compassionate
6. it is faithful (cf. Hos. 4:1)
7. it is a personal relationship (i.e., "to Me"[twice] and "know")

These verses are like a wedding vow!

The VERBS in these verses are PROPHETIC PERFECTS, which are used to emphasize the surety of the fulfillment.

Also note the repeated use of "betroth" (BDB 76, KB 91, *Piel* PERFECTS with *waw*) in Hos. 2:19. It is God who initiates and sets the conditions of the new covenant based on His own (i.e., Messiah) work and fulfillment! The goal is still a righteous people, but the change occurs from the inside out, not on obedience to an external standard. The metaphor changes from legal contract to marriage vows!

2:19 "I will betroth you to Me" The VERB (BDB 76, KB 91, *Piel* PERFECT with *waw*) is used three times in Hos. 2:19-20. It has the connotation of "to purchase with a price" (i.e., dowry, cf. Deut. 28:30). Here it denotes a gift to the bride (i.e., new covenant characteristics). What God's people could not achieve on their own (covenant obedience) is now provided as a gift from a loving husband!

▣ **"forever"** This is the only use of *'olam* in Hosea.

SPECIAL TOPIC: FOREVER (*'OLAM*)

▣ **"in righteousness"** The root of this term means "a measuring reed." God is the standard by which all things are judged.

SPECIAL TOPIC: RIGHTEOUSNESS

▣ **"In lovingkindness"** See SPECIAL TOPIC: LOVINGKINDNESS (*HESED*)

2:20 "in faithfulness" See SPECIAL TOPIC: BELIEVE, TRUST, FAITH AND FAITHFULNESS IN THE OT

▣ **"Then you will know the LORD"** God wants us to know (BDB 393, KB 390) Him not as an object (idol), but in an intimate, personal relationship. This is why the prophet uses the analogy of a marriage contract. The seriousness of sin is seen as a violation of faithful love. God is depicted as a loving and faithful husband, but secondly, as a jealous lover spurned.

The term "know" in Hebrew does not focus on cognitive facts, but on relationship (e.g., Gen. 4:1; 19:8; Num. 31:17,35; Jdg. 11:39; 21:11; 1 Sam. 1:19; 1 Kgs. 1:4; Jer. 1:5). God wants a family!

SPECIAL TOPIC: KNOW

NASB (UPDATED) TEXT: HOSEA 2:21-23

21"It will come about in that day that I will respond," declares the LORD.
"I will respond to the heavens, and they will respond to the earth,
22And the earth will respond to the grain, to the new wine and to the oil,
And they will respond to Jezreel.
23I will sow her for Myself in the land.
I will also have compassion on her who had not obtained compassion,
And I will say to those who were not My people,
'You are My people!'
And they will say, '*You are* my God!'"

2:21-22 The VERB "respond" (BDB 772, KB 851, *Qal* IMPERFECT) is used five times in just two verses. His response is unsolicited and unconditional (e.g., Joel 2:19). A new day of promised agricultural prosperity (cf. Deuteronomy 27-29), which was conditioned on covenant obedience, is coming, but the covenant conditions have been changed. The fallen human heart and spirit are replaced by a "new heart" and a "new spirit" (cf. Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-38). Obedience is still the goal!

The purpose of original creation was a stage for fellowship with humankind made in God's image (cf. Gen. 1:26-27). That purpose was thwarted in human rebellion. The consequences of that rebellion has affected the planet (cf. Rom. 8:18-25). New Covenant salvation in Christ restores the damaged image and allows intimate fellowship with God and obedience.

The OT pictures this new age in Edenic (agricultural) terms, but the NT widens this metaphor to a "new heaven and a new earth" (cf. Isaiah 55-66; Revelation 21-22). The scope is no longer Palestine, but the planet!

SPECIAL TOPIC: WHY DO OT COVENANT PROMISES SEEN SO DIFFERENT FROM NT COVENANT PROMISES?

2:21 "the heavens" This refers to the atmosphere around the earth from which comes the rain.

SPECIAL TOPIC: HEAVENS

2:22 "Jezreel" The term "Jezreel" means "God sows," therefore, there is a play on words here between Hos. 2:22 and 23, as there was in Hos. 1:4 and 11. This was also the name of Hosea's first child, which can be positive or negative (cf. Hos. 1:4).

2:23 "I will also have compassion" This is the name *Ruhamah*, who also was one of Hosea's children (cf. Hos. 1:6). It is mentioned in the context three times, Hos. 2:19 and 23 (twice). Also notice that Lo-Ammi, 1:9, another one of Hosea's children, is mentioned as well in Hos. 2:23.

▣ **"You are My people. . .*You are* my God"** This promise is quoted in Rom. 9:25 and 1 Pet. 2:10 as widening to all people, not just Jews (cf. Isa. 11:9). See SPECIAL TOPIC: THE TENSIONS BETWEEN OT COVENANT PROPHETIC MODELS AND NT COVENANT APOSTALIC MODELS

The terms *goi* (BDB 156) and *'am* (BDB 766) are often used in a distinct covenant connotation. The first refers to any nation, people, or community that is separated from or not included with the speaker (i.e., a foreigner, an outsider, a non-covenant person). The second has the connotation of inclusion (e.g., Exod. 33:13). Notice the play on these words in Hosea.

1. Hos. 1:9, Israel not *'am*

2. Hos. 1:10, used in Rom. 9:24-26 and 1 Pet. 2:10 as a text which includes Gentiles (*goi*) within God's covenant people
3. Hos. 2:23, sinful Israel excluded, but now reincluded based on God's mercy, not their obedience or faithfulness, but on God's mercy (cf. repeated use of "I will" in Hos. 2:14-23).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This is a study guide commentary, which means that you are responsible for your own interpretation of the Bible. Each of us must walk in the light we have. You, the Bible, and the Holy Spirit are priority in interpretation. You must not relinquish this to a commentator.

These discussion questions are provided to help you think through the major issues of this section of the book. They are meant to be thought-provoking, not definitive.

1. Did Hosea really marry a prostitute?
2. Why is marriage used as an analogy to covenant?

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